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ABSTRACT

The SETI Academy Planet Project provides an exciting, informative, and creative series of activities for elementary students (grades 5-6) in these activities each student plays the role of a cadet at the SETI Academy, a fictitious institution. This unit examines the evolution of stars and planets which is an important aspect of the search for intelligent life. It enables students to visualize how the Sun and its family of nine planets have formed and evolved into the solar system. By applying what they have learned about the evolution of the earth, students are led to imagine how planets might have formed around other stars, how individual planets have evolved through similar processes, and what such planets might look like today. This unit explores how the Earth has changed over time, how tectonic forces deep inside brought these changes, and how geographic locations and geologic landforms influence climate. Some activities present opportunities for students to use the results of their research to design planetary systems that contain habitable planets, evolve individual planets into life-sustaining worlds, and create continental and climate maps of their planets. Resources for students and teachers are also listed. (JRH)

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